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ABSTRACT

This study analyzed the cultural conflicts of Latina educators as they emerged from descriptions of their literacy acquisition at home and school and of their teacher education experiences. These tensions were examined in terms of conflicts between authoritative discourses, describing various processes of negotiation that these educators engaged in as each constructed their own discourse as a Latina teacher. Participants were five teachers at two schools that were part of a larger project involving teachers and paraprofessionals at two large, urban California elementary schools which examined how Latina teachers' school experiences related to their instructional practices in their own classrooms. The schools had predominantly Latino, low-income students. Data collection involved focus group discussions and individual interviews that examined teachers' experiences in the classroom. Results indicated that teachers experienced significant conflict between expectations of school success and expectations at home. Teachers tended to receive rather than question the authoritative discourse expectations from both home and school. Resistance was usually individual, not collaborative. There was a common idea that education was a positive goal, yet, there were regarding how education would occur and who would receive it, as well as where, when, and for how long it would continue. (Contains 29 references.) (SM)

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Latina Educators and School Discourse

DEALING WITH TENSION ON THE PATH TO SUCCESS

CIERA REPORT #3-018

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CIERA Inquiry 3: Policy and Profession
What happens to successful Latina students' identities and relationships as they acquire language, habits, preferences, and values associated with school discourse?

There is a need to increase the diversity of the teaching pool; furthermore, Latinos who enter the teaching profession must themselves succeed in school. For this paper, we focused on the Latina teachers' memories of schooling, and found that the teachers experienced significant conflict between expectations of school success and expectations at home. There was a common idea that education was a positive goal, yet we found tensions related to how education would take place and who would receive it, as well as to where, when, and for how long it would continue.

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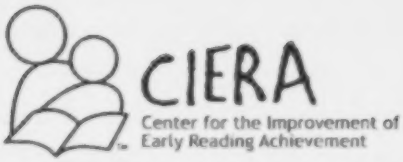

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Latina Educators and School Discourse: Dealing with Tension on the Path to Success

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Teacher educators and education researchers are paying increasing attention to the racial and ethnic disparities between public school students and teachers. In California, nearly 80% of teachers are white, slightly less than the comparable national figure, compared to only 40% of the state's public school students. Latinos make up 11% of California's teachers, but 40% of the student population (Yates, 1999). Universities have implemented various programs intended to increase the pool of credentialed bilingual teachers and teachers of color (August & Hakuta, 1997), including the Latino Teacher Project (Genzuk & Hentschke, 1992), which encourages bilingual paraprofessionals to obtain their teaching credentials. And yet, despite these efforts, 80% of current preservice teachers are white females. A central assumption behind recruiting efforts like those mentioned above is that children will learn better from a teacher who shares their cultural background, or with whom they experience "cultural congruity." On the other side of the debate, Gay (1993b) states that "it cannot be assumed that teachers of color are culturally affiliated with their students" (as cited in Zeichner & Hoeft, 1996, p. 525); nor, writes Montecinos, are they necessarily able to translate their knowledge "into culturally relevant pedagogy and success for pupils" (Montecinos, 1994).

Latinos who enter the teaching profession must themselves succeed in school. However, education research devotes most of its attention to Latinos/as who are in academic peril or are dropping out (Cummins, 1989; Fine, 1991; Freire & Macedo, 1987), focusing on ways that schools disable students who "fail." In contrast, we were interested in the effects of schooling for successful students. What happens to successful students' identities and relationships as they acquire language, habits, preferences, and values associated with school discourse? We found that the teachers in our study experienced significant conflict between their expectations for successful participation at school, and a different set of expectations at home. Conflicts between these discourses arose for a variety of reasons. It is important to

note that at no time did the participants describe a conflict between home and school over the idea that education was a positive goal. Instead, we found tensions related to how education would take place, as well as to where, when, for whom, and for how long it would continue.

Gee (1996) distinguishes between discourses and "Discourses." He describes the latter, capitalized, form as an "identity kit":

> [A] socially accepted association among ways of using language, other symbolic expressions, and 'artifacts,' of thinking, feeling, believing, valuing, and acting that can be used to identify oneself as a member of a socially meaningful group 'social network,' or to signal (that one is playing) a socially meaningful 'role.' (p. 131)

He also describes individuals as possessing a primary Discourse—what we call the home culture—and secondary Discourses, which are acquired later in life and influence and reshape the primary Discourse. One of these secondary Discourses is school culture, which includes the Discourse of being a teacher. The successful acquisition of the Discourse of "teacher," then, requires the acquisition of a new identity.

This acquisition process does not require shedding of the primary Discourse. Rather, Latina teachers must engage in a continual process of negotiation, blending the new with the old. When the various Discourses share values, this negotiating activity often proceeds relatively smoothly, resulting in a useful and creative weaving of individual lives and experiences. But when the values of different Discourses conflict, painful tensions can result, requiring further negotiation. In this study, we focus on conflicts between home and school Discourses, as they emerged in our analyses of teacher interviews.

We have not attempted to exhaustively define home and school Discourses. Instead, in an effort to inventory messages that seemed relevant to particular kinds of conflicts, we aimed to trace the voices behind those messages. We conceived of these voices as "authoritative discourses" (Bakhtin, 1981). Bakhtin describes authoritative discourses as the most distant in time and proximity, and while they may be attached to a speaker, such as a parent or teacher, they may also include sacred words, beliefs, or other fixed texts, such as the Bible. The authoritative discourse "permits no play with its framing contexts" (p. 343) and demands to be addressed. Some of these discourses may have been described in their "pure" forms by participants but we expect that there is blending between home and school messages.

We believe culture is integral to analyzing "discourses." Yet culture is a slippery concept. Gundaker (1998) describes culture as an activity that proceeds through time and space, as a shared pattern of organizing principles for activity in which the mixing of resources from differing backgrounds is the norm rather than the exception. He contrasts this view of culture with that traditionally held in anthropology where cultures are "stable and discrete entities that change from time to time or disappear" (p. 206). Further, he asserts that the perspective of culture as an activity entails "seeing humans as engaged in a battle to render livable stabilities against a backdrop of constant motion" (p. 206). We found Gundaker's notion useful in our examination of Latina educators' negotiation of school and home discourses about identity.

In our examination of these various discourses, we attended to three different aspects often ascribed to identity. The first is ethnicity: we use the term "Latino" to describe teachers' ethnicity in this paper. "Latino" includes persons whose origins are in Latin America. Participants in this study had origins in Mexico and El Salvador. Some of them described themselves as Chicana, a term with political origins in the *movimiento*, or Chicano Civil Rights Movement of the 1960s and 1970s.

The second aspect is gender. All of the participants in this study were women—indeed, women make up seventy percent of all California teachers (Yates, 1999). Furthermore, home and school discourses are aimed at women and men in different ways. Our paper is framed by a belief in gender as a primarily social construction: women are placed at the center as objects of inquiry, and as active agents in the gathering of knowledge. In this view, gender is a critical aspect of individual experience.

Immigration status is the third aspect of identity discussed here. All of the participants in our study were either immigrants or the children of immigrants. Some arrived in the U.S. with legal papers, others did not; consequently, immigration status and legal status were salient to some of the conflicts described by the teachers.

"Cultural congruity" (Jimenez, Moll, Rodriquez-Brown and Barrera, 1999) in schools, or more commonly the lack thereof, has been examined from different perspectives. Most relevant here are the micro and macro examinations of what occurs when children of color strive for success in ways that are not understood or acknowledged. Gee (1991) and Michaels (1981; 1991) offer detailed descriptions of the way in which teachers' narrative expectations affect how their responses during show and tell. Gee (1991) explains how an African American first-grader told a story relying on an oral strategy called "topic associated": a narrative consisting of associated segments whose relationship needs to be inferred. This contrasted sharply with the white teacher's expectation of a focused story. The teacher viewed the girl's retelling as incoherent and rambling, Gee asserts, because to her a narrative meant sticking to a single topic and being concise.

Other research has looked at cultural discontinuity by examining children's lives in and out of the classroom. Carger (1996) shares the realities of school for Alejandro, a Latino, during his eighth-grade year. His home and school worlds often appeared unrelated. Alejandro's family life consisted of learning by observation, gradual mastery of skills, cooperation in tasks, and collaboration in negotiating life's trials. In contrast, his school life lacked modeling, he and the other students were encouraged to achieve individually, and collaboration was considered cheating.

Alejandro's teachers seemed unaware of the possible connections between home and school that could facilitate learning. Similarly, his parents were unaware of ways to negotiate his school success. They wanted Alejandro to have a better job than their own. They wanted him to behave in school, but had difficulties articulating their expectations.

In a larger study, Valdes (1996) found many of the same conflicts. After spending three years with ten newly-immigrated Mexican families, investigating the acquisition and development of academic-related abilities within the family, the community, and the school itself, she found that "schools

expect a standard family whose blueprints for living are based on particular notions of achievement" (p. 5).

Many investigators have researched exemplary practices in an attempt to increase minority children's chances for success (i.e., Gersten, 1996; Jimenez, Gersten and Rivera, 1996; Ladson-Billings, 1994; Moll, 1988). A common thread in this work is the importance of building upon the knowledge that children bring to school, including that derived from their cultural, religious, and familial experiences. In an attempt to help teachers do a better job of reaching out to children of a different ethnicity than themselves, some researchers (e.g., Heath, 1983; Moll, 1994; Gonzalez, Moll, Tenery, Rivera, Rendon, Gonzalez and Amanti, 1995; and McIntyre, Kyle, Hovda, & Gnadinger, 2001) have carried out interventions using the model of teacher-researchers to increase teachers' awareness of other ways of knowing. The researchers mentioned above recognize that a quick *in*service will not address misunderstandings that run so deep. The discourses conflict on many questions, including how to complete a literacy task successfully, how to participate in school, what it means to do well in school, and the proper nature of the relationship between home and school.

It is this complexity of contrasting discourses that drew us to examine Latina teachers' views of their own school experiences. We wondered about the various discourses that would be revealed in the school memories of successful literacy learners. The purpose of this paper, then, is to analyze the cultural conflicts of Latina educators as they emerged from descriptions of their literacy acquisition in home and at school, and of their teacher education experiences. We examine those tensions in terms of conflicts between authoritative discourses, and describe various processes of negotiation that these educators engaged in as each constructed their own Discourse as a Latina teacher.

Method

This study is part of a larger project involving thirty teachers and paraprofessionals at two large, urban elementary schools in southern California. The larger project examines how Latina teachers' school experiences relate to their instructional practices in their own classrooms. Both schools have majority Latino student populations, and both are in poor neighborhoods. The data for this study are taken from the larger set, which was collected utilizing qualitative methods including focus groups and semi-structured interviews.

The participants included five teachers at each of the schools. These teachers are all bilingual and biliterate, and have three to five years teaching experience. There were three phases of data collection during the project. The first focused on the teachers' early childhood reading experiences at home and at school. During this phase, the participants took part in a focus group for the initial discussion, and then met with the research team for individual semi-structured interviews. The second phase focused on teachers' experiences in college and teacher education programs. This phase of the project

began with semi-structured interviews, followed by teachers meeting in a focus group for reflection and validation of the data. The third phase focused on teachers' experiences in the classroom. This report draws mostly from phases one and two. The semi-structured interviews and focus groups lasted from one to two hours each. All sessions were audiotaped and transcribed.

We employed a constant comparative analysis (Strauss & Corbin, 1990) to code the data, which were read repeatedly by all members of the research team. That analysis led us to develop the following codes of conflicts, discourses, and strategies. Further analysis of the discourse data allowed us to notice other factors, including support systems; differing types of discourse across peer, family, and school groups; and various ways the participants coped and negotiated with reading. We categorized the coded data into messages from school and home that responded to these three questions:

1. Who are educated persons?
2. With whom do educated persons associate?
3. What counts as evidence of education?

Likewise, we identified two strategies employed by participants to resolve conflicts between those messages:

1. Silencing or distancing;
2. Internalization or adoption of school values and perspectives.

In the next section, we present each of these categories, illuminated by data.

Findings

The strategies that these Latina educators employed to negotiate tensions testify to various kinds of agency. While participants all seemed reluctant to engage in outright resistance to authoritative discourse, we believe that their negotiative agency has both resistant and reproductive consequences (Dworking & Messner, 1999)—some intended, others perhaps not. This recognition allows us to enlarge our understanding of resistance to include absence or silence, as in Henry Giroux's (1987) description of "illiteracy" as a political action characterized by the refusal to acquire mainstream discourse. We have structured our findings into three sections: conflicts between home and school messages, discourses surrounding those tensions, and Latinas' strategic responses.

Conflicts: "I don't think I really ever got the support that I wanted."

All of the teachers talked about wanting support for their academic studies from family, school, and friends. And all of them received varying degrees of this support from one or two of those sources, at different times. But con-

flicting values often resulted in diminished support, straining the participants' relationships with these individuals.

Rosa described her elementary school as a place where she could find relief from the responsibilities of home and family, where, as the oldest child and a daughter, she was expected to cook and clean, as well as take care of her younger siblings. Schoolwork was "so simple compared to what I had to do at home." She also said that her father was the "biggest obstacle" to her education, because he wanted her to marry early and have a family. In her case, the school discourse conflicted with familial gender expectations.

Livia's mother and stepfather were supportive of her education through high school, but she described their support in very specific terms: "...from a very early age I was always told, 'You're going to school to learn English.' It was never, 'You're going to school to learn math, writing, reading....' Livia connected this message to her role as the family's interpreter. From the time she was young, Livia's parents depended on her to translate their communications with the world. Their specific support for her English studies was intended to increase her abilities in that role. The familial focus on language conflicted with the school's desire to provide instruction in multiple disciplines.

Conversely, Olga remembered that her creativity was strongly supported by her family through storytelling and projects, but was discouraged in school. She felt that her creativity "had no place in school because we were following a rigid format." Olga found the inflexible school curriculum, which she described as "work, work, work," to be unsupportive of her growth as a creative person.

Participants also highlighted meanings of gender in some of the conflicts. Marta noted that most of her professors in college were male while the students were women, saying "the women take care of the hard part and the men like the easy part." Eva remembered that her Chicano studies classes were mostly male, which she attributed to traditional values guiding the family's choice: "if a Latino family had to send someone to college, it would be the male rather than the female, if they could only pay for one person." She also recounted that the few women were well aware of the traditional values implied by the gender imbalance and spoke up in ways that encouraged the men to be "more enlightened."

Nonetheless, most of the conflicts described by the teachers involved situations in which they felt compelled to adjust to the demands of both school and family relations and expectations. Eva's example is typical. She married after high school, then continued to college. Originally, she said that she wanted to have four or five children right away, but adjusted that expectation in light of the demands of college. Saying that she really enjoyed being a student, she realized that having a family would be "problematic," so she held off having her first child until her senior year in college and decided to only have two. At the same time, in college she began to struggle with a heavy reading load: "...under regular circumstances the reading was not a problem. But if a family obligation or problem came up, that was my priority regardless.... It is just understood." She explained further that she did not see this as her family being unsupportive, but as an expression of the deeply held value that "you have to help us first."

The conflicts that teachers described typically involved clashes between the differing discourses of home and school. While teachers were rarely left without resources, these conflicts did restrict the amount and type of support to which they perceive themselves to have access. We see these as ongoing conflicts, different aspects of which become more or less salient depending on the actors, the time, the place, and other contextual factors. Differences in negotiation strategies affect the texture and shape of conflicts, altering participants and contexts.

Discourses

We identified three types of messages about education, from school, home, and hybrid sources. Each of these types answers a question, and their implications overlap. We frame the three questions thus:

1. Who is an educated person?
2. With whom do educated people associate?
3. What counts as evidence of education?

Answers to these questions lead us to a discursive constellation that has implications for teachers' goals, habits, speech and writing practices, personal and professional relationships, and identities as women, as Latinas, as people of a specific social status, and as teachers.

Who is an educated person?: "I had to finish school and I had to be someone."

Being educated and "being someone," as in this quote from Rosa, were frequently equated in our data. In fact, many teachers described the opportunity for education as a key motivator in their families' decision to immigrate to the U.S. Parents' desires for their children's success were frequently framed in opposition to their own status. "Don't be like me," teachers recounted having heard their parents say; "don't work in a factory," "...as a janitor," "...doing what others tell you to do." Parents, and sometimes siblings, were described as having made considerable sacrifices in the name of providing schooling. Olga recalled her parents describing it this way:

> We're poor. You're not going to inherit any money from me. The only inheritance that I'm going to give you is a pass so you can go to school because your education is the only thing you're going to keep with you all through the years. And that's something that I'm not going to give you. I'm going to push you to get there but I'm not going to take it away from you or anybody.

Most of the teachers described a strong message from home in support of furthering their education.

Another message, defined in opposition, concerned relatives whom participants described in admiring terms, but also as "uneducated" or "illiterate." Linda talked about her aunts and uncles, who were hard workers and had

bought their own homes, as her role models, but also noted that none were "educated." She described her grandmother, who "never had education, but she knew how to sell stuff." Linda also told us how her grandmother taught her how to give massages to her patients. She didn't know where her grandmother learned the skill, or how she came to have patients, but Linda admired her grandmother greatly. Participants learned to value formal education, yet not negate informal education.

Angelina described how gender influenced her family's educational history. She described her grandmother as "illiterate" because she wasn't allowed to go to school in El Salvador, but also as a "feminist" because "she made sure that all her children went to school, and a lot of them did go to the university." Angelina remembered her grandmother telling her that "the more educated you are, the more power you have. You can be independent and don't have to depend on anyone." Her grandmother was very supportive of her college education, at least in part because similar opportunities had been denied to her grandmother in her own time.

School discourses addressed types of students. Many of the teachers were placed in English as a Second Language (ESL) classes when they were elementary school students. ESL was described as different from "regular English," and "regular" students often teased the ESL students, making fun of their accents. Participants described moving up and out of ESL as an important part of their educational goals. ESL students were exposed to an important, but less valued type of education. Another reason that ESL classes may be perceived as less valuable is that in high school they do not meet the requirements for English established by state university systems. College-bound students must take "regular" English courses in order to be eligible for college and to avoid remedial English classes.

When describing their memories of high school and college, several teachers said they were "nerds." According to their descriptions, nerds focused on their studies, spent a lot of time reading and in the library, had limited social circles, participated in few activities, and worked all the time. While teachers' families generally supported these efforts, they sometimes saw nerdlike behavior as excessive, especially when it came into conflict with family obligations.

Most of the participants attended monocultural Latino schools until high school, and some until college. The initial contact with students of different races and ethnicities was challenging for some. Eva's school experiences were more diverse than the rest of the group. She remembered that in elementary school, the white children seemed to share a common cultural experience of which she was unaware. They knew fairy tales and Disney stories that she did not. She saved extra money at home to buy those storybooks, and now makes a point of introducing mainstream culture stories to her own Latino students.

As they progressed through their own schooling, and their schools and classrooms became more diverse, several teachers described becoming more aware that Latinos as a group were not considered academically successful. Mauricia recalled a speaker at a university MeCha *(Movimiento Estudantil Chicano de Aztlán)* meeting who addressed perceptions of Latinos as students. She said the speaker told the assembled students that because they were Latino, they were statistically more likely to drop out. He encouraged

them "not to become a statistic, stay in school, graduate." Mauricia credited the speaker with motivating her to complete her degree.

Finally, Rosa described a teacher that she saw as a role model of an educated person:

> I always looked up to her so much. I still know how she looked. She was always dressed really professional. She never wore tennis shoes. I was always intrigued by her professionalism and... I wanted to be like her.

Rosa's image from childhood has stayed with her. Her memory demonstrates how even seemingly superficial factors, such as demeanor and dress, play an important role in constructing one's image of an educated person.

The image of an educated person in authoritative home discourse was frequently defined in opposition to the parent. The educated person was "someone" who did not have to do manual labor or take orders at the bottom of a workplace hierarchy. At the same time, this discourse also respected nonformal education and hard work. Women especially, were understood to have had fewer educational opportunities in the past; for some, that lack of opportunity continues into the present.

The authoritative school discourse values ESL classes less than "regular" classes. Behaviors associated with serious students, or nerds, were valued by the school, but did not carry social currency with most students, and sometimes strained family relations. When ethnicity becomes salient, Latinos are perceived as less academically successful than others and may feel the need to prove their worth as students.

With whom do educated people associate?: "The other Latinos at my school started calling me 'coconut'."

Participants' social networks often changed as their classroom situations changed. One point of separation was related to language ability, with English learners usually placed in ESL classes, while more fluent English speakers were placed in mainstream classes. Literacy ability was another point of separation. Several of the teachers remembered being placed in leveled reading groups in elementary school. Not surprisingly, friendships were formed with the other children in these groups. In this way, school sorting strongly influenced the children's social connections.

At the secondary level, several teachers observed that once they were on a college-prep track, they had less contact with other Latinos. Eva established more friendships with her predominantly white and Asian classmates. Her Latino friends "were my friends because they had been my friends forever... [but they] didn't have such a high success rate." Rosa struggled to remember the names of the other two Latinas that had been in her classes, saying "I was more with an Asian crowd." After Carla moved to a racially mixed neighborhood, she found herself hanging out with "the academic people, the popular people." Her best friend was African American and their other friends were white. She said that other Latinos at school called her a "coconut" and "Ebonia Oreo cookie," meaning that she was "brown on the outside but

white on the inside." For our participants, joining the college track in high school meant less contact with others of the same ethnicity, and sometimes subjected them to negative judgments from other Latinos.

Most of the participants confronted racial diversity for the first time in college. Carmen described college as a time when "my eyes kind of opened up and I saw life differently." Several of the teachers described their initial encounters with people from other cultures as "strange" and "weird." Carmen found that socializing with whites "didn't really feel too comfortable, but I did it anyway to make friends."

For some participants, finding other Latinos to socialize with helped ease the transition to college. Several stayed on the Latino floor of a university dorm. Others joined MeCha, or other Latino organizations. Rosa joined the Mexican American Student Organization at the urging of a friend and found that it helped her overcome her shyness. Two teachers who had been involved in MeCha later left because they saw it as "too radical."

Most of the participants made an effort to connect with people of other cultures. Some even avoided Latinos. Carmen said that simply sharing the same background was no longer sufficient to justify a friendship; "I really didn't interact with my own people or any African-Americans... simply because I'm from East L.A. or Hispanic." However, most eventually tried to build friendships with Latinos who shared their interests. As Rosa said, "The friends I made then are still my friends now. We have similar goals. We are still going to college. We are talking Ph.D., we're finishing up our Masters'. We are still on the college path. Those friends are still there."

Only one of the ten teachers in this study is married. Most avoided dating through high school and college, partly because of strict family rules, and partly because of the demands of schooling. Also, their expectations of a partner were influenced by their schooling, as we discuss further in the next section. Several described attempts to maintain a relationship, but said that their boyfriends were unsupportive and demanding of their time. Rosa reflected on how her life was different as a result of the fact that she had a career and her ex-boyfriend did not. She speculated that men may find her more intimidating because she is educated, adding, "some of my male friends thought—I don't know what they thought, but communication just stopped."

In college, these teachers tended to seek out other Latinos with similar goals, whose shared cultural backgrounds helped them to feel more comfortable in an unfamiliar institution. Many of them avoided dating and marriage because their pursuit of an education complicated potential relationships. The home discourse on such associations was not strongly voiced, but there seemed to be an acknowledgement that education might strain relations with neighbors and potential romantic partners. The school discourse enforces social networks based on achievement levels, with separation increasing as students age. For Latinos, who occupy fewer places in college preparatory tracks, this often means the construction of new social networks and potential alienation from Latinos on different tracks.

What counts as evidence of education?: "It makes you a much better person when you read."

Good grades, degrees, and credentials were among the many types of evidence that participants used to mark their education. Marta, the youngest of five children, described how proud her mother was of the children by listing their credentials. "[My mother] has an attorney, my brother's a supervisor with the County as a social worker, my other sister graduated in public administration, my other sister is in business administration, and I'm a teacher." She recounted how a white family for whom her father worked had befriended the family shortly after they arrived in the U.S. Marta's parents regarded the couple, both professionals, as role models for Marta and her siblings. "This is the way to go," her parents told them, "You can do that, but you have to get an education."

Language use and literacy were considered further evidence of education. Olga told us how, in retrospect, she thought that her family's custom in Mexico of storytelling helped her learn to speak well. It was a large family, and after the older members had told stories, the children were expected to participate as well. "Our family stressed oral skills.... It was our way of entertaining ourselves.... TV was forbidden in our house.... We learned, 'If you're going to express yourself, you've got to do it quick, fast and to the point, or else you lose your turn.'"

Eva also recalled a family practice that she now credits for her strong bilingualism and biliteracy. Her grandmother would spend two hours every night reading from religious texts and praying with Eva. At the time, she recalls, "It was kind of like cruel and unusual punishment for me." Now, she looks back and values those practices for how they have helped her in school and in her career:

> It exposed me to history and then I had questions, so it exposed me to think about things and question things. It exposed me to print, and reading in English and Spanish. When I started reading and writing in English, she still maintained my bilingualism at home by forcing me to read in Spanish, not letting me forget, not letting me stop practicing it.

These quotes exemplify practices that the teachers did not value as helpful in developing their literacy until years later.

We also found examples of activities that were regarded as evidence of education at the time that they were occurring. Participants highlighted the ability to use standard English as evidence of education. "Correctness" in speech, as well as in writing, was considered to be a clear indicator of education level. Rosa named her current boyfriend's speech as something that immediately impressed her when they met, and motivated her to ask him to proofread her work. "I told him, 'Read my paper.' 'Why?' [he asked] 'Because you talk so perfect in English.' He has a more sophisticated vocabulary than I do, so I thought, 'wow, this guy knows how to talk.'" Carmen's father can speak and write in English, but refused to do so out of embarrassment that he would make a "mistake." Consequently, her entire family continues to speak Spanish at home, even though they are all able to speak English. She

also remembered that at school, especially in elementary school and junior high, she thought that it was "cool" to speak English.

Writing English "correctly" was both a valued goal and a potential obstacle for the teachers in this study. Linda fondly remembered a teacher who "really focused on grammar. I have problems with grammar, but she tried to help me.... She gave me worksheets in order for me to have good grammar. Everyday she gave me at least two worksheets on grammar." Angelina remembered grammar exercises as fun: "The easiest thing in terms of writing that I remember was when we had to dissect a sentence. I could tell you the verb, the direct object, the noun." Rosa described how she reshaped the image of an ex-boyfriend, whom she planned to marry, based on his writing skills. When he sent her a card, she recalled, " I was so disappointed in his writing. I was very disappointed.... [I thought,] 'I'm not going to say anything because he will never write to me again.' He had a lot of spelling errors, a lot of incomplete sentences." They broke up not long afterwards. For Livia, the value of correctness in writing became an obstacle when she had to write a statement as part of her application to college. She said, "I had to do it by myself and I wasn't that confident in my writing." She later took the statement to a teacher who was her mentor, and asked him to proofread it.

Reading was also considered evidence of education, especially reading "good stories," reading quickly, and remembering what was read. Olga remembered both of her parents as very supportive of education. Her mother bought many books and an encyclopedia for Olga and her siblings. Linda remembered beginning to succeed in school when she was able to "read faster and pay more attention to the reading." Rosa recalled reading challenging books as a child and says that she strives to provide the same kind of books—"real stories, full of meaningful language, more challenging words"—to her own students.

Ironically, though it is Eva's quote that heads this section, she, like most of the other participants in this study, does not enjoy reading. "I've always read what I had to. I always did well in school It came easy to me. So, I just read what I had to read to do well. And it's still like that." Although she, and the other teachers, value reading, it is not something she chooses to do for pleasure.

The family discourse on what counts as evidence of education included speaking and writing "correctly," earning certificates and credentials, and achieving high grades. Two teachers highlighted home storytelling and religious practices that they consider to have helped them in their educational careers. While the school discourse does not differ greatly from the home type, the main emphasis on reading was made at school.

Guided by these discourses, our participants definitions of an educated person, of whom that person would associate with and what counted as evidence of education. The discourses influenced teachers' goals and habits, their speech and writing practices, their personal and professional relationships, and their identities.

Strategies

As participants described the ways in which they negotiated conflicts between various discourses, we found that their strategies fit within one of two broad approaches. Sometimes the participants engaged in these strategies singly, and sometimes collaboratively. Usually, when they described a collaborative action, it was taken in conjunction with other Latinas. The two approaches to resolving conflicts that we identified are:

1. Silencing or distancing;

2. Internalization or adoption of school values or perspectives.

The participants used these strategies in relation to school discourse, because we take the primary, or home, discourse as the default discourse. We also believe that these strategies are in constant flux. We name two such strategies here, but assume that there are more.

Silencing: "Forget it, I'm not even going to deal with it."

Mauricia's high school made student field trips to several universities in northern California, and she decided that she wanted to apply to two of them, both with excellent reputations. However, when her mother responded with, "Oh no, what are you going to do? You're a girl. You can't go up there. How are you going to live by yourself?" Mauricia found the clashes of values overwhelming. She recalled thinking, "Forget it, I'm not even going to deal with it," and attended a college that was accessible by bus from her home, thus lessening the tension with her mother. We found similar failures or refusals to act in the face of conflict with other Latinas. While we cannot ascribe intentions or clearly trace consequences, we believe that there may be multiple explanations for these silences or "inactions," including a lack of emotional or other resources, reluctance to damage relationships, and resistance to authoritative discourses. The consequences of this strategy are similarly difficult to trace, and unless the transcript makes a clear connection, we have avoided speculation.

Participants often responded with silence or distancing to class activities that were difficult or uninteresting. Livia recalled being in third grade and not understanding the language arts activities:

> I would sit there and look at [the paper] and be very quiet. That was a very tough thing. If I looked at my shoes long enough, the day would be over with, and they wouldn't pick on me, and I would be okay for the day. But I would pay attention to the words that were there, I do remember looking at the words.

Livia remained silent, hoping to avoid the possibility of publicly making a mistake. But she was not "checked out"—instead, she tried to find a safe way to learn the content. She described elementary school as "very frustrating" on account of not yet having enough English skills to excel in class, and more so because her low grades prevented her from participating in extracurricular activities.

Rosa described using a similar strategy in a college English class. She remembered feeling "lost" during small group discussions of literature: "You had to read *Moby Dick*, Thoreau, all these people that I could never understand. It was hard to decode these books.... They are so famous yet I don't understand why. Is it because of their difficulty?" In all likelihood, other students in the class were struggling as well, but Rosa failed to ask for guidance. Asking for help is a behavior expected from college students, but Rosa's belief that she was the only one not understanding the text prevented her from speaking up.

Eva responded to the ethnically diverse social mix in college with silence. "I didn't speak to anyone, I didn't know anyone and everybody was white. I just thought, 'Well, I'm here to get an education, not to socialize.'" It wasn't until she started her teacher preparation courses that Eva met other Latinas who became her friends. Interestingly, Eva recalled that "somebody" at the first college she attended told her that "Latinas don't join sororities." When she transferred to a college where sororities were more socially important, she didn't consider the option of joining, hewing to the earlier authoritative discourse.

Olga shared an example of distancing herself from her own writing. She said that she had kept diaries from childhood until recently—"big, thick books." Four years ago, she read through them and then threw them away. She found the reading interesting and said: "It helped tremendously because it's a reflection. It's bits and pieces of you and it shows your growth...I remember going back to it and thinking, 'Wow, this is not me, this is totally not me.'"

We find it interesting that Olga discarded that document—which reveals how her identity changed from her time as a young student in Mexico, through her immigration to the U.S. at the end of high school, through her college experiences, and now into her time as a teacher—describing it as no longer relevant.

Perhaps the most disturbing example of the use of silence as a strategy to deal with conflict was recounted in a focus group. Rosa recalled that "we had so many problems because it was an entire Latino floor" in a predominantly white university.

> We had fires. We actually had people starting fires on our floor. Discrimination, I don't know what you would call it.... Bulletin boards would be torn down and little things. To me, I didn't feel it as much as other people felt it. I didn't feel it like that. I didn't take it personally. We never did find out who they were, but there was animosity. I felt it at times. I never took it seriously.

Rosa decided to not take apparently racist violence personally because it would have jeopardized her education, for which she had already struggled with her father. During this same conversation, Marta, who attended the same university, recalled that she "didn't think of myself as another Mexican-American, another Hispanic, Latino, whatever you want to call it.... I was just another person coming to the [university]." For Marta, seeing herself as a person without ethnicity was a reasonable self-protective strategy in a hostile climate like that described by Rosa.

Silence or distancing appears to have been a strategy used by most of these Latinas to protect relationships, avoid public embarrassment about their lack of English or school skills, and to avoid the real and personal implications of racist violence.

Internalization: "This whole change came over me."

A second strategy was the internalization or adoption of school values or perspectives. In this section we present data that reflect participants' changing views about having an education. We would like to emphasize these internalizations are themselves hybrid, having blended with the participants' home discourses. As Marta described it (using educational terminology), "Obviously your culture helps to shape you. The fact that I've experienced things through culture makes them part of my schema."

Several teachers remembered "loving school." It represented a place where they could be recognized for their performance, an orderly place with clear rules, and for some, a way to escape limited family expectations. Rosa reflected, "I don't know where I'd be right now without school. Probably I'd be married with kids... everyone around me is getting married and having kids."

Perhaps because they did well in school, teachers internalized some of the values of school discourse, sometimes devaluing home discourses in the process. For example, Rosa recalled that in college, she wrote a paper analyzing the Virgin of Guadalupe, the dark-skinned image of the mother of Jesus revered by Catholics across Latin America. The sacred image is believed to be the result of a miracle performed for an Indian peasant named Juan Diego by the Virgin herself. Rosa laughed at herself as she remembered describing the Guadalupe as a "cult," reflecting the influence of the class she was taking.

Another way that Latinas internalized school discourse was through the adoption of school standards to judge themselves and others. Livia reported that she took as many Advanced Placement courses as possible in high school:

> I took AP English, I took AP Calculus... I took AP Composition, AP Literature, AP Spanish Composition, AP Spanish Literature. I mean, any APs that were out there, I was taking them because I was not going to be mediocre. [I took them] to prove to myself that I was not stupid.

Livia accepted the school-based standard and applied it to measure her own intelligence and character.

Olga reports that she has "pushed" her mother to continue her formal education beyond the five years she received in Mexico. She said that she is puzzled by her mother's reluctance to "do something more," because after all, it was her mother that pushed her and her two siblings to complete their college degrees. Her mother "starts taking courses, then drops them. She doesn't follow through." Olga said that she gives her mother "pep talks"; "'Yes, it is hard, but you'll get your reward,' and she never did it." Having

completed her college education, Olga was disappointed that she couldn't help her mother attain similar accomplishments.

Eva, whose quote heads this section, reevaluated the world in which she grew up after going to college. Her comments don't necessarily devalue her home culture, but they do reflect the distance between who she is now and who she was before her extended formal education:

> This whole change came over me. I started thinking about things. Not drastically, maybe more responsibly, more realistic because I saw that this is the real world... You really start to understand the broader picture. Until you get [to college], you're kind of isolated, protected from things. You start changing... getting educated makes you think about things.

Conflicts occurred between various discourses, but the participants were able to create strategies that allowed them to navigate these conflicts. By silencing or distancing themselves, these Latinas were able to build a protective barrier between themselves and the conflict. On the other hand, there were instances when the same women internalized the values and perspectives of the school and its teachers. This variation reflects differences in strategies of interaction with school discourses.

Conclusion

In her poem "Borderlands", Gloria Anzaldua describes her experience of being Latina in the United States. Tension, violence, struggle and uncertainty are the norm, not the exception, in her description:

> ...
> In the Borderlands
> You are the battleground
> Where enemies are kin to each other,
> You are at home, a stranger,
> The border disputes have been settled
> The volley of shots has shattered the truce
> You are wounded, lost in action
> Dead, fighting back...
>
> (Anzaldua, 1997)

In this paper we have framed the negotiation of home and school discourses of Latina educators through conflict. We have not done this in order to suggest that cultural border crossings can or should be free of conflict. Indeed, Anzaldua also describes the Borderlands as an intensely creative space where new forms are created, shared, and recreated. Nor do we support a romantic idealization of home cultures. The teachers in this study live in the real world and, as much as they have struggled, they have also benefited in many ways from their educational experiences and professional standing. Finally, we do not maintain that successful students and teachers of color should more completely assimilate into mainstream culture. As Fine (1991) remarks, "As a culture we need to worry a lot about the adolescents who are

being tossed out of public school. But we also need to worry about the racial, cultural, and class-based anesthetizing performed on those students who constitute the 'academic successes' of low-income urban schools" (p. 137). Rather, we maintain that teachers, students, and schools would profit from making "invisible" discourses "visible," and thereby available for analysis. Talking about familial, peer, cultural, and academic expectations is one way to begin to expose discontinuities. Further, we contend that by engaging in such analyses, teachers and students would develop more critical awareness of ways in which discourses and structural inequities are mutually constitutive, which in turn can promote voice and personal options, helping teachers to avoid reproduction of asymmetrical power relations in schools.

In the home and school authoritative discourses that we traced above, which addressed the labeling and sorting of educated persons, the rules of association for different educated persons, and what counts as evidence of education, conflicts were typified by some sort of clash of values or preferences. The teachers were required to expend energy to temporarily reduce tensions between these conflicting discourses. In this context, with often heavy demands from both home and school, they had little time and scant motivation to stand back and critique the dynamics of their situations. Consequently, the strategies used by the teachers in their negotiations generally lacked a critical element, and left structural factors that contributed to the conflict unproblematized.

Teachers tended to receive rather than question the authoritative discourse expectations from both home and school, which made demands on them based on their age, their gender, and their ethnicity. When they resisted an authorized message, it was often in invisible and silent ways, as in the refusal to speak, or read, or "deal" with things. Resistance was usually individual, rather than collaborative. Those collaborative efforts that the teachers did describe were aimed at meeting the demands of home or school discourse, as when they worked on school projects together or met as teachers to plan their reading program. At one point in the study Eva described how the women in her Chicano Studies classes had banded together to challenge the stereotypically traditional norms of male students and teachers, but such recollections were atypical.

Although these Latinas may have intended to use their home culture in the classroom, this often was not possible. It is ironic that the school system, which encourages homogenization during early schooling, then calls on Latinas' "cultural knowledge" when they become teachers. As successful learners they were required to disassociate from many cultural ways of knowing, yet it is assumed they will instinctively teach in "culturally appropriate ways" when they enter the profession. This assumption is problematic. If Latinas or Latinos do not connect cultural knowledge with their own schooling success, why should they connect it with the success of their students?

This study points to paths that can increase the repertoire of strategies available to new educators of color. We recommend identifying the various discourses of preservice teachers and those of the educational institution, then "reading" and commenting on those discourses together. Professors and students should ask questions such as: What does it mean to be educated in your homes and in this school? How do people associate with one another at home and on campus, based (or not) on their education? What counts as evidence of education at this school and in your homes? This questioning

should be expanded to encompass other sites as well, including other worksites, professors' and students' neighborhoods, and religious communities. The collaborative inquiry should interrogate structural relations by asking questions such as: What individuals and which institutions benefit/suffer from these understandings?

Central to this type of examination is analysis of teacher education programs and school sites themselves, because these are the locations where the reproduction of social inequalities is carried out. Having analyzed meanings that are implicit in discourses and ways that those meanings delimit life chances, teachers can begin to make informed decisions about how they envision their classrooms as the same or different from the ones in which they grew up. They are also free to consider ways to gather the resources of their own students while guiding them through similar critical discussions. Students deserve the opportunity to learn how to consciously navigate various Discourses. The Latina teachers in this study survived the system without that explicit aid; another generation should not have to do the same.

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